

From: CNPS - San Luis Obispo County Chapter
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DUNES OR DUNE BUGGIES?

Is there an environmental future for the NIPOMO/PISMO DUNES of San Luis Obispo County? The decision is at hand. You can help - by writing just two letters NOW before January 15th. But first, some questions and background.

Will 300,000 Off Road Vehicle recreationists continue to be counted by Pismo State Beach rangers on a holiday weekend, as the heavy 4-wheel-drive pickups, the sleek jeeps, the 3-wheeled All Terrain Cycles and the thousands of miscellaneous vintages of dune buggies stream down the beach rampst at Oceano and Grover City?

On a beautiful weekend among these scenic dunes, overlooking a sea sparkling blue, will some of us come seeking the fragrant purple pompons of Monardella undulata var. frutescens or the soft scarlet plumes of Castilleja mollis, the Surf Thistle, Cirsium rhotophilum or its secluded relative, the White Marsh Thistle, Cirsium loncholepis, glistening green leaves among carpeting of Juncus leseurii...and others of the rare and endangered plant denizens of the Nipomo Dunes? Will they be there? Or crushed and vanished?

It is already certain that we can no longer find furry-leaved lupines, Lupinus nipomensis, nor Dithyrea maritima, the Spectacle Pod, nor probably any hybridizing abronias with their inventive variety of colors; as the grinding tires on the big sheels have smashed them again and again. Not yet crushed into oblivion, however, are feathery stands of the lavender summer aster, Erigeron foliosus var. blochmanae, and what we call the "Dunedelion," Malacothrix incana.

The Nipomo Dunes were recommended for a great state park, 18 miles of incomparable coastline, from Pismo State Beach to Point Sal State Beach, by the National Park Service in their 1959 Pacific Coast Recreation Area Survey... And were described as "the most urgently needed landscape preservation project in the State" by the California State Parks 20 Year Master Plan of 1968.

From the days of the Chumash Indians, whose shell mounds still dot the dunes, down to the present, though beset by teeming throngs of vacationers, the Nipomo Dunes have given man refuge from the tempo and pressures of everyday life. Solitude, leisure, natural beauty, spiritual solace and a habitat singularly unique...are rapidly vanishing under accelerated impact from Off Road Vehicle recreation. Imagine 15,000 ORVs on the beach at one time, 2,000 more in the dunes, 5,000 camping vehicles with families on beach and dunes!

There is NO FUTURE for this rich and scenic wonderland unless we act NOW. Two letters must go from each of us immediately, supplying the State Coastal Commission Staff with biological information if we can, and supporting their position of preservation of the dunes. . . And secondly, we must strongly urge the State Coastal Commission to rescue these dunes from current devastation by a moratorium or prohibition of Off Road Vehicle use.

In writing, particularly promote the concept of a moratorium on all ORV use, as asked for in the San Luis Obispo County Local Coastal Plan. The dunes have been declared by many to be a disaster area. But with a moratorium on ORVs, time and nature will gradually repair and heal the dunes.

The time in which to write needed input is short. Coastal Commission hearings will be held in early February. Letters need to go now, both with information and with support for protection of this last major dune complex of the entire coast of California.

WRITE TO:

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South Central Coast District
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